

## ON THE UP



*David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, looks at the increase in student numbers for the academic qualifications which are available to the sector and explains how students really can access learning while earning...*

**I have been accused of favouring the vocational qualifications route to becoming qualified at the expense of promoting the more academic qualifications.**

I am sorry if I have given this impression but to meet employers expectations we have, through the skills agenda, addressed the difficulties and barriers to learning.

We should all be pleased with how our sector has embraced the apprenticeship and vocational qualifications, as have our Approved Centres through their increasing flexibility with a variety of delivery options of courses - which are now available.

As some form of apology it must also be recognised that the Government is still allocating the majority of training funding support to their flagship apprenticeship scheme, to ensure they hit their skills agenda targets.

Readers will have noticed a huge marketing drive both nationally and locally, to encourage employers and learners to "buy into" training through various branded schemes such as 'Train to Gain' and the 'Apprenticeship Scheme', so don't let it be a "strain to gain" - to access these programmes contact your local GTC Approved Training Provider (see GTC website) as they have the contacts and courses to assist staff and business development.

Employers are more likely to invest in staff development if it is offered at a reasonable cost, free if possible, however the quality of the courses and relevance to staff and employment requirements are essential and this is where the GTC has a key role with Lantra Sector Skills Council, the Awarding Bodies and the Approved Centres.

Back to the more academic awards such as the Higher National Certificate, Diploma, the Foundation Degree and the Bachelor of Science and Master of Science Degrees - the GTC has been involved in the development, accreditation and the ongoing reviewing of these important qualifications.

What has changed in recent years is the fact that many people have thought you have to attend a College or University full time to gain the qualification, when, in fact, the successful Centres have listened to the industry and invested in staff development and technology, to allow those students seeking to continue to work and study to do so. The Centre with the most students registered on the Foundation Degree has the option to study on-line as well as the traditional part and full time study route. Full time Higher Education courses are still available with excellent placements available.

Progression to a Bachelor of Science, BSc is also very much part of the development and career path in which the GTC works, with a limited number of Approved Centres to ensure we can provide the sector with highly qualified Course Managers, Agronomists and Advisors.

As University fees increase it is likely that the online, distance learning options to study will increase.

There is a tremendous amount of commitment and discipline required to study from home and the support from the Centre is paramount. Students who have achieved the prodigious qualifications confirmed the flexibility they requested from tutors from time to time, especially as work commitments took priority, were accommodated for therefore allowing them to complete the course.

Higher education for many greenkeepers was never an option, especially having opted to gain employment on leaving school, but having discussed the modern delivery options now available please do not be put off. With scholarships and



bursaries available through Colleges, Universities and BIGGA, The R&A can often help with fees once your means have been accessed.

Several students have progressed and achieved a Master of Science Degree, MSc, through the Cranfield University and concern has been expressed on how this course has now been withdrawn as a taught programme and is only available through research.

In recent years the sports turf sector has benefited from those committed students who have successfully achieved the MSc. The GTC is currently involved in discussions to hopefully encourage a Centre in partnership with a University to ensure the sector has a progression route through academic study, similar to the one previously offered by the Cranfield MSc.

Please be in no doubt that the GTC is firmly committed to ensuring the sector has all avenues covered, in terms of education and training, to ensure golf club employers and today and tomorrow's greenkeepers are well catered for.

Starting with the schools there will be land-based Diplomas, which will lead interested students and learners to a greenkeeping apprenticeship scheme, with both vocational and academic courses Government approved qualifications, delivered by GTC Quality Assured Centres through a range of delivery methods.

More on the GTC Quality Assured Scheme next month!

*Check out the GTC current network of Approved Training Providers via our website: [www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk)*

GTC is supported by:





# Industry Update

INDUSTRY UPDATE



## TRAINING PROGRAMME HERALDED A SUCCESS

Thousands of JCB employees have embarked on the biggest training initiative in the company's history as it faces the global economic challenge head on.

It is part of a huge programme involving more than 2,000 employees from JCB's Midlands' and Wales factories aimed at equipping the workforce with the skills needed to weather the economic downturn – and take advantage of the opportunities a recovery will bring. Plants in Rotherham, Cheadle, Uttoxeter, Wrexham, Rugeley and Derbyshire are all taking part.

Among those participating are 750 employees from the Backhoe Loader, Loadall and Hydraulic Business Units – all based at the World HQ. They are involved in a four-day programme being held at Uttoxeter Racecourse which includes sessions on performance manufacturing operations, problem solving and health and safety.

Corporate College, the business arm of Derby College, is delivering the programmes for staff attending the sessions at the Racecourse, with colleges in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Burton, Walsall, Lichfield and Tamworth delivering similar training to staff from other factories.

The scheme has already won praise from Skills Secretary John Denham, who held up the company as an example of good practice during a debate in the House of Commons. And employees taking part in the training programme have also heralded it as a big step in the right direction as JCB looks to combat the effects of the global economic challenge.

## ONLINE FORUM EXPANDED

Spaldings has announced the launch of a free classified section ([www.spaldings-forum.co.uk](http://www.spaldings-forum.co.uk)), introduced as part of their online forum. The forum thread went live' recently and came in response to positive feedback received from online visitors.

The online classified section will allow legitimate agricultural professionals to buy and sell farm machinery and associated products. The service is entirely free and offers users the chance to fully optimise Spaldings online customer base.

## KICKBOXING WINNER

Campey Turfcare's Sales Demonstrator, Lee Morgado, is on top of the world after winning the World Kickboxing Association's amateur championship in New York.

Lee, 25, won the welter weight title at the Roseland Ballroom, just off New York's Times Square recently, beating Eddie Martinez by a fourth round TKO (technical knock out).

Lee was supported in New York by his girlfriend and his coach Vinny Shoreman.

"I was elated to win," he said, "Although I was confident that I would! My next fight is likely to be in Portugal in February this month for the World Full Contact Association (WFCA) European title. I would love to win this one, and be European champion. I am pretty confident that I will...I don't take part to lose!"



## CONTRACT RENEWED

Club Car has renewed its contract with Remedy Oak Golf Club located near Horton in Dorset.

Remedy Oak, designed by John Jacobs, is nestled within 256 acres of existing ancient woodland, and set challenges to golfers of all levels with water hazards and tall trees purposefully placed.

Currently the club has 20 Precedent Club Cars and it will be updating to 20 New Precedent IQ Electric Golf Cars, two Villager four Precedent IQ Electric and one Precedent Refurbished IQ Electric.

This new fleet is due to arrive this month and it is hoped that it will provide the club with the same, if not more, benefits than the current fleet has this year.

Tractor Hire will be managing the agreement. They company is distributor for Club Car across Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset as well as the original territory of South Wales.



L to R: Michael Fance, Ed Carter and John Noyce, Scotts Professional UK.

## NEW ROLES FOR STAFF

Four members of staff from Scotts Professional's turf & amenity business have been promoted into new roles.

John Noyce has worked as an Area Sales Manager for Scotts for nine years in total. In his new, wider role, he'll provide technical and sales support to golf and sports clubs across the South East of England.

Michael Fance's role as Area Sales Manager for the South East of England also takes a new focus. Reporting to National Sales & Business Development Manager Richard Walton, he'll provide technical and sales support to local authorities, contractors, lawn care companies and landscapers.

Also reporting to Richard Walton in his new role is Ed Carter, who has been promoted to a National Key Account Manager. After four years as Area Sales Manager for the North of England and North Wales, he'll be responsible for driving new opportunities for the company within the turf and amenity sector.

And in the South West, Simon Keeble adds turf and amenity support to his existing role in the Horticulture division.

## PGA OFFICIAL SUPPLIER STATUS GAINED

A leading supplier of synthetic turf and practice greens has proved it's the real thing by earning PGA official supplier status.

Huxley Golf has put pen to paper on a deal, paving the way to get involved with the PGA's growing portfolio of national and international branded facilities.

As part of the agreement, the PGA's property department will promote the Hampshire-based firm's products to its range of branded golf courses and academies in the UK, Ireland, Spain, Turkey, Cape Verde, Cyprus, China and Russia.

It cements a long-standing relationship between the two parties, which dates back more than a decade and includes the installation of a state-of-the-art indoor putting green within the PGA National Training Academy at The Belfry.

## RELIABILITY KEY FOR RUDDING PARK

Rudding Park Golf Club, near Harrogate, has invested in a new fleet of Toro mowers to tend to its 18-hole Hawtree Championship course and recently opened six-hole Repton short course.

The North Yorkshire club is new to Toro, having used a mix of machinery – most of which was supplied by another major manufacturer. Seeking improved reliability in his latest purchases, however, Course Manager Richard Hollingworth turned to his local dealer at Cheshire Turf Machinery.

"We buy on quality, not colour," Richard comments. "And quality counts more than price. We were primarily looking for reliability in our new purchases – Tony Dodson (the Yorkshire Sales Manager for CTM) is very, very helpful and recommended Toro, which we hadn't used in the past."

One Toro Reelmaster 5610-D fairway mower along with a Groundsmaster 3500-D and two Reelmaster 3100-Ds with Sidewinder trim mowers are now hard at work across Rudding Park's extensive grounds, including the recently developed £750,000 Repton short course.



L to R: Lely's Nigel Lovatt, Rudding Park's Course Manager Richard Hollingworth, CTM's Tony Dodson and Lely's Jeff Anguige

## EUROPEAN OPEN

The European Open will be held at The London Golf Club - where BIGGA's very own Chairman, Peter Todd, is Course Manager - for the second consecutive year from 28-31 May 2009, following its successful return to England last season for the first time since 1994.

A world class field, including defending champion Ross Fisher, of England, will contest the £2.4 million tournament, which can secure precious earnings towards the inaugural Race to Dubai. Fisher profited most from the return of The European Tour to his native country in 2008 by claiming his second European Tour victory by an emphatic seven strokes over Sergio Garcia of Spain last July.

The European Open will once again be played over the 7,257 yard, par 72 Jack Nicklaus-designed Heritage Course, which is one of two courses - along with The International - at The London Golf Club, near Brands Hatch, in north Kent.

# Membership



This month  
BIGGA welcomes  
the following new  
members...

## TRACEY MADDISON, HEAD OF MEMBERSHIP SERVICES, GIVES A DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE

### BIGGA launches a new Membership Benefit

Stress, health and wellbeing are becoming more and more serious issues. For example, did you know that one in five people are stressed at work (CBI Absence Survey 2008)?

BIGGA recognise that stress is becoming a real concern, especially work-related stress. In order to help you address any issue that may be causing you to feel stressed, BIGGA are pleased to launch a new membership benefit, the Greenkeepers Support Service, a confidential, professional telephone counselling service which can help you proactively manage stress by providing immediate emotional support, advice and practical information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Greenkeepers Support Service can work with a wide range of concerns from emotional issues such as anxiety, stress, depression and low self-esteem to family and relationship issues, marital and relationship problems, critical illness and bereavement - this list is not exhaustive. One telephone call to the Greenkeepers Support Service could be all that someone needs to begin to manage their own work-related or personal problems and improve their situation.

Greenkeeper Members of BIGGA can now call the Greenkeepers Support Service on a freephone telephone number 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and speak to a professionally qualified counsellor. For full details visit the Members Area of the BIGGA Website [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) or contact the Membership Department.

### Save money at Harrogate Week 2010 by becoming a member today

This year we managed to save a Head Greenkeeper money. By joining BIGGA the Head Greenkeeper was able to take advantage of the BIGGA Members rate at Harrogate Week - see example, above right.

Basic Budgeting and Finance (1 day)	
Member Rate .....	£105+VAT
Non Member Rate .....	£210+VAT
Next Steps in Budgeting and Finance	
Member Rate .....	£105+VAT
Non Member Rate .....	£210+VAT
Environmental Legislation.....	
Member Rate .....	£50+VAT
Non Member Rate .....	£110+VAT
TOTAL	
Member Rate .....	£260+VAT
Non Member Rate .....	£530+VAT

After joining BIGGA we managed to save the Head Greenkeeper £149.

### Make it Happen in 2009

Over the last few weeks I've chatted with many people about what 2009 may bring and I think the general gist of all my conversations is that we agreed 2009 would be a challenging year both personally and professionally.

Whatever the future holds for us, one thing is sure, if we sit back and wait for things to happen then the wait could be a long one. You have to make things happen. Whatever goals you set yourself bear in mind that as time passes those goals and desires can change so every so often review them and update if necessary, but remember flexibility is the key.

Last month I referred to 'Your Pages', you may have noticed that this has now been renamed 'Region and Section Pages', it can still be accessed via the Members Area of the BIGGA Website. Here you will find contact details of the Regional Administrators and the Section Secretaries. Also keep checking for information relating to Section events throughout the year.

### Thought for the month ...

*Einstein said 'the definition of insanity is to keep doing what you have always done and expect different results'.*

## SCOTTISH

Stuart Bayfield, West  
Iain Benton, East  
Terry Steele, North  
Keith Wilson, East

## NORTHERN

Roland Ainscough, North West  
Andrew Hutchinson, North East  
Daniel Ibson, North West  
Ryan Tuppen, North West

## MIDLAND

Stephen Ashby, East Midland  
Gavin Charlton, Midland  
Kevin Glazier, Berks/Bucks & Oxon  
Jason Harriman, East Midland

## SOUTH EAST

Luke Biggin, Surrey  
Jayne Cassidy, Surrey  
Danny Dalton, Kent  
Ross Garcia, Surrey  
Andrew McEvoy, Surrey  
Michael Roberts, Kent  
Christopher White, Kent

## STH WEST & WALES

Richard Chenoweth, South West  
Tom Collings, Devon & Cornwall  
Rhydian Harris, South Wales  
Ben Hooper, Devon & Cornwall  
Kevin Pitts, Devon & Cornwall

## INTERNATIONAL

Oksana Gluza, Ukraine  
Mykhayla Zasukha, Ukraine

## CONTACT US

By telephone  
- 01347 833800 (option 1 for Membership.)

Other useful telephone numbers (for  
greenkeeper members only)

Personal Accident Helpline  
02075 603013

Greenkeepers Legal Assistance  
0800 177 7891

Greenkeepers Support Services  
0800 174 319



Tracey Maddison  
Email: [traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk](mailto:traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk)



Justine De Taure  
Email: [justine@bigga.co.uk](mailto:justine@bigga.co.uk)



Brad Anderson  
Email: [brad@bigga.co.uk](mailto:brad@bigga.co.uk)



# Learning & Development

## Key Sponsorship:

### UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF GREENKEEPERS

The funding provided by Gold and Silver Key Sponsors is used to produce training and career aids, DVDs, CD Roms, field guides and provide refunds for training fees and subsidised learning and development courses. The funding also helps support seminars, workshops, courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

Many young greenkeepers owe their career progression to the assistance they've had from the Learning and Development Fund. An equal number of established greenkeepers have also been able to access the fund to continue their professional development thanks to the donations of the Gold and Silver Key Sponsors.

### THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING KEY SPONSORS



#### GOLDEN KEY



#### Golden Key Individual Members

JH Greasley; WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG.



#### SILVER KEY



#### Silver Key Individual Members

Ade Archer; Steven Tierney; Paul Jenkins; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Steve Dixon; Sam Langrick.



### Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, provides a departmental update...

Harrogate Week is over for another year, and no sooner have Rachael and I soaked our aching toes and rested our stressed out brains are we planning the Continue to Learn Education Programme 2010 – watch this space!

Now that 2009 is underway I am pleased to announce that we have further funding available for education and training purposes through the Refund of Fees Scheme and the BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships supported by Ransomes Jacobsen.



#### Refund of Fees Scheme

Supported by the Gold and Silver Key Members, the Refund of Fees Scheme offers BIGGA Members the opportunity to reclaim a percentage of their course costs for training that is specific to their job as a greenkeeper e.g. computer skills or pesticide licence. Unfortunately the scheme would not support courses such as cordon bleu cookery or embroidery for beginners unless it could be proved that it was job specific!

An 80% refund of course fees can be claimed up to a maximum amount of £350. Every Member who meets the criteria for the scheme can make one claim annually.

To be eligible to apply for the Refund of Fees Scheme you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a full member of BIGGA
- Have been a member of BIGGA for at least two consecutive years
- Have paid the course fee themselves
- Be able to provide proof of payment

A refund will be paid out on completion of the course.



#### Higher Education Scholarships

Thanks to the continued support of Ransomes Jacobsen, BIGGA are, once again, able to offer a scholarship to those members who are undertaking a Higher Education course. The courses that can be supported through this scheme include:

- NVQ Level 4
- NVQ Level 5
- HNC
- HND (Scotland)
- Foundation Degree
- BSc

The maximum scholarship that can be awarded is of 50% of course fees up to a maximum amount of £1500. Only one scholarship will be awarded per member.

To be eligible to apply for a Scholarship you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a greenkeeper member of BIGGA
- Have been a BIGGA member for a minimum of two years

Your application will also be assessed on the following:

- The type of education course
- Previous training and development
- Contribution to BIGGA
- It is desired that the selected course contains an environmental module

To apply for either the Refund of Fees Scheme or a Higher Education Scholarship complete and return the form with the required paperwork. Application forms for both schemes can be downloaded from the BIGGA website (go to the Education page and click on downloads), by emailing or telephoning the Learning and Development Department (01347 833800 option 3).

#### Region & Section Pages

You may have noticed that the 'Your Pages' section of the BIGGA website has been renamed and is now called 'Region & Section Pages'. These pages are still accessed through the Members area of the website.

The Region & Section Pages give you the contact details for the Regional Administrators and Section Secretaries and may list details of events that are taking place.

# OHIO STATE PROGRAM... ONE YEAR ON

*Greenkeeper, William Law, fondly recalls his placement year in The States...*

**At 15 years of age and with an interest in golf, my attention quickly turned to a career in greenkeeping during a brief stint working with four greenkeepers at Thetford Golf Club, Norfolk.**

I was excited at the prospect of studying turf and I enrolled on a three-year Foundation Degree in Sporturf Science course at Myerscough College in September 2007.

The course allows a one year work placement year, so I took the decision to head to the States, wanting a big challenge and to help maintain a golf course to the highest possible standard. I didn't hesitate when the opportunity to join the Ohio State University Turfgrass Program came up starting in May 2007 for my placement year.

I had been given the chance to work at the Double Eagle Club, Ohio, with Golf Course Superintendent, Todd Voss. I flew out to Columbus, Ohio, for an orientation visit to Ohio State University

and after meeting Mike O'Keeffe and dotting the i's and cross the t's, I was also taken to the Jack Nicklaus Museum in Columbus, when half way round, Todd Voss from Double Eagle Club greeted me. I shook his hand, and my American adventure had started.

Before arriving at Double Eagle, I knew it was one of the best conditioned golf courses in the states and that it was to host a US Open Sectional Qualifying event only one week after I was to start. It struck me just how important attention to detail was, even in my first week. As the summer passed, the golf course missed almost every storm, as we went through one of the most driest summer's in the club's history.

In August I attended the 2007 Turfgrass & Landscape Research Field Day at The Ohio State University, gaining an insight into different experiments into the science of turf under different conditions. Another real benefit to being at Double

Eagle was that you were able to play golf after 4pm every day.

In late October, myself and every other intern on the program made our way down to South Carolina to attend short course seminars. I met many other interns from other golf courses, which proved to be great networking, a chance to relax and a great way to learn more about the industry. We also got a tour around Harbour Town Golf Course by Superintendent, Gary Snyder.

Days later, I began training at my second golf course in the States, FarmLinks Golf Course in Alabama. FarmLinks is unique, being the world's only research and demonstration golf course site. Mike O'Keeffe placed me here to support my degree course at Myerscough and gain a lot of experience with warm-season grasses.

FarmLinks brings in roughly 1200 Superintendants and turf professionals in groups of 10-15 from around the globe to evaluate,



test and exhibit the latest products that the turf industry has to offer. FarmLinks works closely with its three cornerstone partners, Agrium Advanced Technologies, BASF The Chemical Company and Toro. It's with these three companies that FarmLinks educate the tour groups on what is known as the "FarmLinks experience". Each intern based here is lucky enough to be invited to the experience and in my second week in Alabama I joined a group of Superintendents from Minnesota to discuss advanced fertiliser technologies and to get an insight as to what FarmLinks offer.

I was shown around laboratories where they collect some research from, attended fertiliser seminars by Agrium, discussed latest products brought out by Toro and learnt about the different pesticides, fungicides and fertilisers used by BASF. The tour group are taken on an "on the course tour" to be shown research carried out by the staff based at FarmLinks and are accommodated in

the lodge overlooking the 17th green.

Shortly after spending two days with the guys I was ready and excited for working at this world-class venue and learning as much as I could here in my internship.

I was here with six other interns from four different continents! Each intern was from the Ohio State Program and spoke very good English. Every one of us spent different periods of time on their internship, before moving on, and we all went away with great experience and knowledge to succeed in the industry. Accommodation was free and within easy access to work.

I must say it was very unusual at first to be surrounded by a golf course that was going into the transition of dormancy. Having only been only around cool-season grasses before, I had a lot of questions to ask. Would golfers enjoy playing on a course that appeared to be going yellow and how would our maintenance techniques differ?

FarmLinks boasts a variety of 27 different grass species on their 18-hole golf course, with mainly TifSport Bermuda being the desired choice on fairways. There are 14 Bermuda grass fairways, three Zoysiagrass fairways and a seashore Paspalum fairway. All greens are A1/A4 creeping bentgrass, with the exception of the putting green (split up into three sections; L-93, A1/A4 and Pencross) and tees are all TifSport Bermuda with the exception of several zoysia grass tees. Every winter all par-3 tees, driving range tee and a single fairway are overseeded with perennial ryegrass.

Every Tuesday the golf course was closed to work on essential maintenance projects. This usually meant we could top-dress greens and have them ready for play by Wednesday. FarmLinks is the only golf course in the states to have the original "DryJect" in their shed, a great machine but very costly! This also was a job reserved for Tuesdays throughout spring.

*(continues on page 20)*

# Toro finance helps you stay the course.

**Times are hard, but that doesn't mean you have to risk your hard-earned reputation by compromising on the quality of machinery to care for your principle asset – your course.**

Choose from any of these superb options designed for today's market conditions and to suit your own specific requirements. You'll have peace of mind from knowing your facilities will benefit from the best turfcare equipment there is. Moreover, so will your budgets and cashflow.

And remember, quality Toro machinery not only gives you outstanding results; it's also more efficient, productive and reliable. That means a long life, reduced downtime and low maintenance bills. So Toro quality actually costs you less in the long run.

However, you must act NOW – before 31 March – to take advantage of these 'best-ever' deals. There probably won't ever be another chance to buy the very best on such great terms.

**Contact your Toro dealer or Lely UK on 01480 226800.**

## 1. Zero Option

**0% interest.  
One plus two  
annual payments.**

**Initial payment followed by two  
identical payments 12 months' apart.**

**Offer must end 31 March 2009**



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## **2. Zero-Plus Option**

**0% interest and nothing to pay until September 2009.**

**Then 60 monthly payments at a competitive rate.**

**Offer must end 31 March 2009**

## **3. Payment Holiday Option**

**3-year package with annual payment holidays.**

**Monthly payments with a 'holiday' between November and April.**

**Offer must end 31 March 2009**

Finance is for business purposes only and is subject to acceptance. UK only. Terms current at date of preparation. For a limited period only. 01/09.



*partners in turfcare*



(continued from page 17)

Aerification week at FarmLinks was tiring but very enjoyable. The course was closed for two and a half days for all greens to be hollow-cored (5/8 inch tines, 2 inch spacing) and top-dressed. The greens measure 139,500 ft<sup>2</sup> and in three days the staff of 18 greenkeepers racked up 40 hours each. By the Thursday morning the greens were up to a putting standard after the top-dressing sand was “brushed-in” several times and watered. We did this in the second week of March.

All putting greens at FarmLinks are maintained to a perfect standard. They have little or no shade issues and most greens have giant fans close by so cool-air flows across the putting surface, relieving stress from the hot and humid summer’s in Alabama.

Also during the summer months FarmLinks uses the “Soil-Reliever”. This is a tractor mounted machine that is used solely on heavy traffic areas. The solid tines are 3/4 inch in diameter and the machine is used whenever possible to relieve compaction.

Interns at FarmLinks are trained on a range of tasks. All jobs are displayed on the lunch room board in the mornings and FarmLinks understand the importance of giving much of the training to interns. I was trained on mowing greens, tees, approaches and fairways. Also I sprayed

greens and fairways regularly, verticut fairways, aerified greens, changed holes and much more. Attention to detail is considered a major factor when preparing the golf course for play, like at Double Eagle.

Fairways and approaches are mown three times a week in late spring, greens are mown everyday and rough twice a week. Tees are also cut three times a week and bunkers are flymown once a week, usually on Tuesdays when there is no play.

At the end of May, my 12-month internship came to an end as I chose not to extend my J1 visa. When I left FarmLinks to return to the UK, the golf course had completely come out of dormancy and temperatures were approaching the 90’s. During my time in the states, the US Department of State changed the rules for interns in allowing them to return for internships as many times as they like, as long as he or she maintains their student status or be no more than one year after graduation.

Since my arrival back to the UK, I immediately started on a seasonal basis at Walton Heath, Surrey only four days after my last day at FarmLinks! I begin my last year on the Foundation Degree in September. I would encourage others thinking of a career path in turf to join the OSU program as it is well recognised and opens up many opportunities. My thanks go to Mike O’Keeffe, Todd Voss and

also Mark Langner, Director of Agronomy and Applied Research and David Deweese, Golf Course Superintendent at FarmLinks, for their efforts in the 12 months I was in The States.



Hilton Head Island Golf Course Superintendent, Todd Ross, with William Law

